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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 001239

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS AND PRM
BEIJING PLEASE PASS CHENGDU
LONDON FOR POL - GURNEY
NSC FOR MILLARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/30/2013
TAGS: PREF PREL PGOV CH NP
SUBJECT: NEPALI KING SAYS TIBETAN DEPORTATIONS A MISTAKE

REF: A. KATHMANDU 1018

¶B. KATHMANDU 1214
¶C. KATHMANDU 1132

Classified By: DCM ROBERT K. BOGGS. REASON: 1.5 (B,D).

¶1. (C) In a June 30 meeting with the Ambassador, King Gyanendra opened by apologizing for May 31 deportations of 18 Tibetans (Ref A). He characterized the decision to deport the 18 as undertaken by a bureaucracy that "went off on its own" in the "last minutes of the former government." The Government of Nepal has taken the matter very seriously, he continued. The deportations were "a bump on the road," the King said, an aberration that does not reflect official policy and which he assured the Ambassador should not happen again.

¶2. (C) On July 1, Abraham Abraham, Country Director for UNHCR in Nepal, told the Ambassador that he expects 19 Tibetans who were detained in western Nepal on June 24 (Ref B) to arrive in Kathmandu later that evening and to be handed over to UNHCR for onward travel to India. Abraham described UNHCR as "very happy" with the treatment the refugees had received from government officials so far, passing on reports that they had been well fed and well cared for during their detention. Abraham emphasized that he believes the low-profile approach adopted in this latest case and in the successful processing of another 40 Tibetans on June 13 (Ref C) is working well.

¶3. (C) Comment: The King's eagerness to emphasize that Government of Nepal (GON) policy remains unchanged underscores the importance the GON attaches to re-establishing its credibility on this matter. We share UNHCR's optimism that the smooth processing of transiting Tibetans since May 31 indicates that the GON will maintain its earlier policy toward asylum seekers and does not plan to deport other Tibetans in the future. Nonetheless, we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

MALINOWSKI